

**7625 Masonboro Sound Road
Wilmington, NC 28409**

July 16, 2020

The Board of Education
Ms. Lisa Estep, Chairperson
6410 Carolina Beach Road
Wilmington, NC 28412

Dear Members of the Board,

We have become aware of your discussion about the name of Walter L. Parsley Elementary School. As descendants of the Parsley family we would like to offer a word.

First we want to be clear about our conviction that racism is absolutely wrong. We are profoundly disappointed by whatever role Walter L. Parsley played in the 1898 tragedy in Wilmington. We are very sorry that a member of this family was involved and we unreservedly condemn what happened.

A little history may be helpful. The 17.5 acres parcel of land on which the present school stands was sold to the School Board by his grandson, also named Walter L. Parsley (1920 - 2000). The minutes of the August 1999 board meeting confirm this in the conditions for approval of the conveyance of the property.

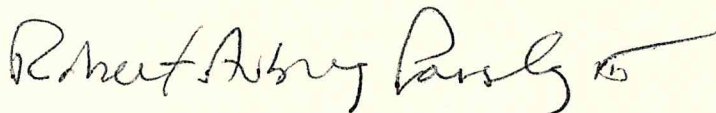
His above-mentioned grandfather had once conveyed a small parcel for a previous school, Masonboro School, which served children from approximately 1913 to 1925 and no longer exists. There is no relationship between the present school and that, except for an archeological site recalling the earlier school. As cousins not directly involved, our knowledge of these real estate transactions is limited; but it seems important to recognize that the land for the present school was provided by his grandson.

If the name of the school is irredeemably offensive it may be best to change it. Another idea would be to delete the Walter L. and simply call it Parsley Elementary. That is what it is familiarly called by the children and the neighborhood already. This would provide nice continuity for them and the school tradition.

The Parsley family has contributed to the history of Wilmington over many years as mayors, bankers, and business and church leaders. We deeply regret the heinous actions of one ancestor but we are grateful for all that the family has meant to this community.



The Rt. Rev. Henry Nutt Parsley, Jr.



Mr. Robert Aubrey Parsley, III

cc Dr. Del Burns, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Robin Hamilton, Principal, Walter L. Parsley Elementary
School